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DEPT FOR WHA/BSC AND G/TIP - KBRESNAHAN

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SUBJECT: IOM PROPOSAL FOR G/TIP-FUNDED PROJECT

REF: DOUTRICH-SIGMON/BRESNAHAN E-MAIL ON 02/07/08

SUMMARY

1. (U) SUMMARY: IOM proposed a third-phase of its successful previous G/TIP-funded projects. The Embassy fully endorses the proposal, which is summarized in this cable. The GOU has also emphasized its support for continued cooperation in this vital area. Post submitted the full proposal with required attachments and fully itemized budget in early February (ref). Phase III is a two-year program designed to build on the increased awareness and willingness of national and local officials, civil society and the private sector to combat trafficking in persons (TIP) in Uruguay and regionally. The project will include: a) conduct research in high-risk areas for trafficking, at tourist and border localities; b) conduct training activities for decision-makers; c) provide technical assistance to the institutions in order to promote and support services of direct assistance and protection for victims and their families and strengthen skills among law enforcement officials, prosecutors and the judiciary; d) help prevent child pornography through the promotion of the responsible use of the Internet. END SUMMARY.

URUGUAY'S TIP LANDSCAPE

2. (U) Uruguay generates migration and has internal migration, both motivated by the search for better economic opportunities. Uruguay's political, legal and regulatory environment is conducive to engagement on trafficking issues. The challenge for the GOU is the lack of resources and a low awareness within the general population of the extent of the problem. Uruguay's public institutions lack the economic means to combat exploitation (insufficient victim care centers, lack of police and judicial protocols to follow, lack of specific training and assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and of trafficking.)

3. (U) Uruguayan leaders from all sectors have told Post that they are interested in continuing/expanding the efforts and results of Phases I and II. This positive response was a notable first since Embassy Montevideo began coordinating G/TIP-funded activities in Uruguay and came despite a change of government since the process began in 2003. Among those who requested continued engagement were law enforcement officials at the Ministry of the Interior, the National Institute for Minors and Adolescents of the Ministry of Social Development, the Human Rights office within the Bureau of Political Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Human Rights Bureau of the Ministry of Education and Culture, provincial Mayors (Intendentes), prominent members of the business community, Congressmen and NGOs. Both earlier

phases developed a network of local experts, engaged the private tourist sector to help fight trafficking within their domain, achieved government acceptance of the project input, and increased willingness and commitment to work further in drafting public policies.

THE PROPOSAL "PHASE III"

¶4. (U) The Embassy and IOM seek to build on the successes of Phase I and II to deepen awareness of trafficking, smuggling, and sexual and labor exploitation in Uruguay and border countries (Argentina and Brazil), and to build to the capacity of government institutions, NGOs and civil society, both at the regional and national levels, generating concrete tools for regional coordination in the prevention and the direct assistance to victims.

In order to achieve this objective, the project will expand the achievements of Phases I and II along the following project objectives:

A) To identify the risks associated with the social vulnerability that influence the potential victims of traffic in areas of migrant population, particularly border areas with Argentina and Brazil and areas where recent large investments have been concentrated - e.g. the provinces of Paysandu, Rio Negro and Colonia.

B) To enhance local capacities on counter trafficking through training key stake holders concerned with the issue. Offer protection and reintegration services for victims and their families.

C) To strengthen the judicial system and the ability of key stake-holders to prosecute offenders and direct assistance to victims of trafficking.

D) To prevent TIP by alerting within the educational field about the dangers faced by boys and girls and their households when navigating the Internet. This is especially critical in light of the nation-wide rollout of "Plan Ceibal," a government initiative to provide a laptop with an Internet connection to each student in Uruguay.

BACKGROUND ON PHASES I and II

¶5. (U) Phase I (October 2003-September 2004) was an anti-internet child pornography project with regional scope. The purpose was to inhibit internet child pornography in Uruguay and other OAS member states. It was jointly sponsored by the Embassy, the OAS Inter-American Institute of the Child (headquartered in Montevideo), and ECPAT (an NGO) and was implemented within the framework of Mercosur. The project coordinated research on the problem in a regional context and helped create/implement legislation and enforcement within Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Bolivia.

¶6. (U) Phase II (October 2006-November 2007) was coordinated and carried out by the Office of International Migration (OIM) and included a series of seminars to develop and educate a network of key policy makers throughout Uruguay on trafficking issues. The geographical coverage included Mercosur countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Chile). The network allows participants to share information and raise awareness of TIP issues when developing and/or implementing public policies. Phase II also included the development of a special research component covering the tourist resort of Punta del Este, Uruguay.

¶7. (U) The one-year program of seminars on Phase II included a workshop to promote regional cooperation held April 23-25, 2007, in Montevideo, with sixty-five representatives from Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay. During the workshop, IOM introduced a new web forum which offers participants the ability to exchange documents, follow

up on specific cases, coordinate efforts and discuss best practices. The web forum contains all workshop presentations and conclusions and can be accessed at www.puntosur.org. The website is in Spanish. A one day (September 28) TIP training workshop requested by the Uruguayan National Institute for Children and Adolescents (INAU) was held in the city of Rivera, directly across the border from the Brazilian city of Santana do Livramento. Two workshops and a final seminar in November in the province of Maldonado where Uruguayan INAU and municipal authorities, as well as members of the public and private tourism sectors of Maldonado, pledged to devote greater resources to combating TIP throughout Uruguay.

18. (U) The team of experts in charge of these workshops was the same for both phases and is expected to join OIM if a Phase III is approved. For working purposes, they used the concept of "social vulnerability" focused on trafficking. The work of law enforcement officials is now showing the results of Phase I since more and more individuals have been prosecuted for producing and selling child pornography on the Internet.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) COMMENT: Post earnestly solicits G/TIP funding for IOM's proposal for a third phase of our efforts to combat TIP in Uruguay. Thus far we have enjoyed measurable success in the main objectives as well as positive benefits to our bilateral relationship. TIP has proven to be an excellent subject for bilateral cooperation with the left-leaning Frente Amplio government and promises to remain a subject they will engage on proactively, something we aim to cement through this proposal.

Baxter